supplying the tissue at the back of the ear. A similar case has been reported to me on excellent authority, and is corroborated fully by the sufferer himself, of a rash being invariably developed in a boy after eating oatmeal, but in this instance it was unaccompanied by any alarming symptoms. A somewhat different case of idiosyncrasy is recorded in *The Lancet* (February 28, 1888, p. 394), in which a negro woman in Barbadoes experienced the most alarming symptoms after an ordinary dose of cocaine.

West Cliff, Colorado. THEO. D. A. COCKRELL.

Botanical expedition to S. America.

As various inquiries are made in regard to the botanical expedition to South America which I am contemplating, I feel at liberty to say a word in this public way about the matter.

The plan is to start at Buenos Ayres, in the Argentine Republic, ascend the Paraguay and Parana rivers as far as possible, and to collect the water and land plants in the surrounding region along the southern boundary of Bolivia and southwestern boundary of Brazil.

Attempts will be made to explore the tributaries of the great water system which empties through the Rio de la Plata into the Atlantic. Subsequently the Argentine Republic will be crossed westerly to the Andes, and a visit made to Chili, with attempts to collect the little known flora of the desert of Atacama.

Of course, these plans are liable to be modified by circumstances, but it is hoped that a large and rare collection of the South American flora of the regions visited may be made and brought home to enrich the herbaria of our country.

If further information as to the disposal of the sets collected is desired, letters may be addressed to the writer up to the 1st of June next, or to Dr. N. L. Britton, of Columbia College, New York.

Ashland, Mass. THOMAS MORONG.

Report of the U. S. Mycologist for 1887.

Into the portion of this report which concerns California several errors have crept that are to be regretted. All the fungi mentioned as having been observed for the first time in California exist in my herbarium, from numerous localities. Uromyces Betæ and Puccinia prunispinosæ were collected by me in 1876, and are included in *Cat. of Cal. Fungi*, published as long ago as 1880. Peronosporia viticola, an account of which, with some localities, was given in *Bull. Cal. Acad.*, No. 7, June, 1887, abounds in California on our wild vine, Vitis Californica, and the denial of its existence by the U. S. mycologist will be productive of very mischievous results if it prevents our vine-growers from taking measures to protect themselves from this dreaded pest already in our midst.

San Francisco. H. W. HARKNESS

To the members of the Botanical Club of the A. A. A. S.

Your committee, appointed in August last, to devise a method for the exchange of specimens among American botanists, have, after consultations with other botanists, decided that the most practical method is through the herbarium of the Department of Agriculture at Washington.

A classified stock of duplicates belonging to the department is available as a basis of an exchange herbarium.

Those desiring to exchange specimens should address, for rules and other information, Dr. Geo. Vasey, U. S. Dep. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

GEO. VASEY, SERENO WATSON, N. L. BRITTON, THOS. MORONG, B. D HALSTED, *Committee.*

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The families of plants.

The rapid advance in our knowledge of plants which has come from the wonderful development in appliances seems to demand a new general presentation of the plant kingdom. For the Phanerogams this is being undertaken in a masterly way by Drs. Engler and Prantl,[1] under whose editorship the best specialists are at work upon various groups of plants. The illustrations are abundant and most excellent, while the text is all that could be desired. The publisher is to be commended, not only for the handsome typography, but also for the very low price, which puts this invaluable work within the reach of almost every botanist. It appears in separate numbers, which come rapidly enough, but which hold no special relation to each other. Thus far the only completed parts are the second, fourth and fifth of the second volume, although several other numbers belonging to incompleted parts have appeared. A full discussion of the literature and anatomy of each family precedes the presentation of their classification, which includes the genera. Volume II, Part 2 (in 3 numbers), contains the *Gramineæ* by E. Hackel and the *Cyperaceæ* by F. Pax. Of the grasses 12 tribes are recognized, and 315 genera. In Cyperaceæ there are 65 genera, Carex being said to contain more than 500 species. Volume II, Part 4 (in 2 numbers), is more varied in its nature, containing several small groups, as follows: *Flagellariaceæ* (3 genera), *Mayacaceæ* (1 genus), *Xyridaceæ* (2 genera). *Rapateaceæ* (6 genera), and *Philydraceæ.* (3 genera), by A Engler; *Restionaceæ* (19 genera), *Centrolepidaceæ* (6 genera), and *Eriocaulaceæ* (6 genera), by G. Hieronymus; *Bromeliaceæ* (40 genera), by L. Wittmack; *Commelinaceæ* (25 genera), and *Pontederiaceæ* (6 genera), by S. Schönland. Volume II, Part 5 (in 4 numbers), contains *Juncaceæ* (7 genera), by F. Buchenau; *Stemonaceæ* (3 genera, among which is our Croomia), *Liliaceæ* (193 genera), by A. Engler; *Hæmodoraceæ* (9 genera), *Amaryllidaceæ* (71 genera), *Velloziaceæ* (2 genera), *Taccaceæ* (2 genera), *Dioscoreaceæ* (9 genera), and *Iridaceæ* (61 genera), by F. Pax. The Smilaceæ are included under Liliaceæ, while *Androstephium* Torr. is re-

[1] ENGLER, A., and PRANTL, K.—Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien nebst ihren Gattungen und wichtigeren Arten insbesondere den Nutzpflanzen. Volume II, Parts 2, 4 and 5. 8vo. Copiously illustrated. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1887. Subscription price M 1 50.